

For Lesson 1

Key Concepts and Questions

Anti-racists Ideas: Racism is the problem and in need of changing. Transform racism.

Jason Reynolds: “anti-racism is simply the muscle that says that humans are human. That’s it. It’s the one that says, “I love you because you are you.” Period. That’s all. And if we can figure out how to do that — and it feels so simple. And this is why racism has been the greatest hoax ever played on humans. It’s the greatest hoax ever, because that element of “I love you because you are you” should be the most human thing we know. It should be a natural thing to say, “Look, I love you, because you remind me more of myself than not.”

Segregationist ideas

Something wrong with black people. They cannot be changed. Get away from Black people.

Assimilationist ideas.

Something wrong with black people that could be overcome by their assimilation/teaching by white people into white culture. Transform Black people.

- Each idea has rationalized racial inequity in its own way. (Kendi)

1860: Jefferson Davis: “This Government was not founded by negroes nor for negroes, but by white men for white men.” “The inequality of the white and black races was “stamped from the beginning.”

Discussion Questions:

What are the consequences of continued omissions about the history of racism and antiracism in the US?

Jason Reynolds in a conversation with Krista Tippett, says that “anti-racism is simply the muscle that says humans are human.” How would you talk to someone who doesn’t understand the phrase, “Black Lives Matter.”

In his letter to readers, Kendi says: “When I began writing *Stamped from the Beginning*, I must confess that I held quite a few racist ideas. Yes, me. I’m an African American. But it’s important to remember that racist ideas are ideas. Anyone can produce them or consume them.... Fooled by racist ideas, I did not fully realize that the only thing wrong with Black people is that we think something is wrong with Black people.” There is more to this quote on page xv of the Letter, take a look. Question: talk about racist ideas you might have held in the past, or may hold now. What ideas do you hold about gender that may or may not be true, or people who are not American? How do we all get caught up in ideas that may group people in ways that are not accurate?